

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

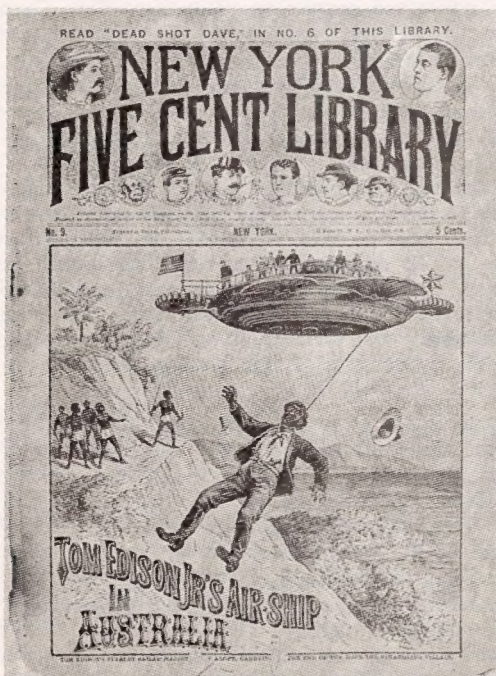
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Chapters From the Chronicles of Nick Carter

By J. Randolph Cox



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 172

NEW YORK FIVE CENT LIBRARY

Publisher: Street & Smith, 29 Rose St., New York, N. Y. Issues: 157 (then name changed to Diamond Dick Library to 205). Dates: Aug. 13, 1892 to Nov. 2, 1896. Schedule of Issue: Weekly. Size: 8½"x12". Pages: 16. Price 5c. Illustrations: Black and white pictorial cover. Contents: Adventures of a number of character heroes such as John L., Jr., Telegraph Tom, Nat Woods, Pawnee Bill, Tom Edison, Jr., Dead Shot Dave, Gentleman Jack, Electric Bob and others. Diamond Dick began to be featured in No. 88 and became so popular that the name was changed to Diamond Dick Library with No. 158.

Chapters From the Chronicles of Nick Carter

By J. Randolph Cox

One of New York City's most celebrated citizens will not be found listed in the telephone book, nor in a Who's Who of its residents, nor in any history of that city. Yet he lived as surely as his contemporaries: Richard Harding Davis, Theodore Roosevelt, Charles Dana Gibson, O. Henry, Jack London, Buffalo Bill Cody, and Mark Twain. He practised his chosen profession during the administrations of more presidents than any other citizen. He was America's greatest detective. His name: Nick Carter.

If his biography cannot be found among the lives of his contemporaries on library shelves it is only a flaw in the imagination of the searcher. To a generation of boys, and of many boys-at-heart, Nick Carter was as real as any of them, as real as Sherlock Holmes, in fact. His first biographer, John Russell Coryell, tells of the many letters he received asking for help in solving difficult problems; letters addressed to Nick Carter. From all over the world they came, some addressed merely to "Monsieur Nick Carter, le Grand Detective Americain, New York," others to "The Famous Criminalist of New York." They were delivered to the address of the publisher of his life story.

The life of Nick Carter may be found, not in one volume, not in a five-foot shelf of volumes, but in shelf after shelf of paper-covered publications all bearing the imprint of publisher, Street and Smith.

To John R. Coryell he was a figure who must stand

"always for the right against the wrong, for law and order against the disintegrating forces of society—he must do so in the very nature of his being—[as] the modern embodiment of that splendid figure of the age of chivalry, the knight errant, always ready to buckle on his armor, pull down his visor, and couch his lance in rest to defend innocence against villainy. Moreover, he is a very d'artagnan—that supreme hero of romance—in his ability to extricate himself from any difficulty, against any odds, by his sheer keenness of wit, his strength of arm, and his indomitable courage."¹

The d'Artagnan image is an apt one, not only for the character of Nick Carter, but for the size of his biography. The Scope of that massive work certainly suggests the output of Alexandre Dumas. Seventy-eight serials in *Street & Smith's New York Weekly*, 115 short stories in the same publication, 282 issues of the *Nick Carter Detective Library*, 819 issues of the *Nick Carter Weekly*, 160 issues of the weekly *Nick Carter Stories*, 127 issues of *Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine*, 40 issues of the *Nick Carter Magazine*, and a dozen appearances in other publications, a prodigious chronicle devoted to one man. In the collected works of Nicholas Carter (Nick's biographers almost always signed his own name to his adventures) familiarly known as the Magnet and New Magnet Library, will be found 631 titles. Not all of these are stories of Nick Carter's exploits. Fifty are about another detective named Harrison Keith, two are about a young protege of Nick Carter (Wat

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Denton), one each are about Stuyvesant Crane, Peterkin Wiley, Clinton Hastings, Creed Lawton, and Hyjah, the Hindoo Detective. That still leaves 574 paper-covered volumes—most of them reprinting the cases recounted in the various Weeklies. Dumas would have felt quite at home.

It is this edition of the adventures of Nick Carter that may be familiar to readers today. As late as 1933 there were at least 400 volumes in print and available from the publisher.

Nick Carter was not the first detective to appear in the so-called dime novels or story papers when he made his debut on September 18, 1886, in *Street & Smith's New York Weekly*. The earliest recorded exploit of a dime novel detective hero appeared in the *New York Fireside Companion* in 1872. It was a serial by Harlan Page Halsey called *Old Sleuth, the Detective; or, The Bay Ridge Mystery*. It would later be reprinted as the first number of the *Old Sleuth Library* in 1885.

The honor of being the first regular periodical devoted to detective stories in this country may have to be shared by the *New York Detective Library* and the *Old Cap Collier Library*, both of which began in 1883. All three of these publications were anthology series and did not ordinarily feature the adventures of only one detective hero. Instead, they seemed to stress variety in combining occupations and national origins with the detective ability. There were Irish detectives, blacksmith detectives, sailor detectives, man, woman, and child detectives, and even a magician (*Vasco, the Magician Detective*, by Ed Strayer; *Old Cap. Collier Library* #757, 1898). Their pages were filled with now forgotten names: Gideon Gault, Dave Dotson, Old Electricity, Old Sloop, Old Search, Young Sleuth, Dick Danger, Japanese Joe, Teddy O'Flynn. In 1885, the *New York Detective Library* (issue number 154) introduced perhaps the only character to be considered a serious rival to Nick Carter—James Brady, better known as Old King Brady. He soon appeared in serials in the story paper, *Boys of New York*, and eventually in his own weekly series, *Secret Service*. Perhaps we should say that but for the slightly later appearance of Nick Carter, the most famous dime novel sleuth would have been Old King Brady. In the later issues of the *New York Detective Library* Brady's adventures alternated with those of Jesse James. Circulation figures must have jumped on the weeks when the two were combined in one story.

Even before these city sleuths came upon the literary scene, the word detective was applied to frontier heroes and heroines. *Beadle's Half Dime Library* No. 109 (26 August 1879) featured Edward L. Wheeler's masked man of the plains in a story called *Deadwood Dick as Detective*. And on November 14, 1882, the same writer's *Denver Doll, the Detective Queen*, was published in No. 277 of the *Half Dime Library*. *Denver Doll* may be in the running for being one of the earliest woman detectives in American fiction, if the term "detective" is allowed in its "frontier sense"—a fighter of crime who literally tracks down the foe to unravel a mystery. A certain degree of luck must also be allowed.

The similarity of objectives of frontier hero and city detective is part of the shift from rural to urban society reflected in popular fiction. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., makes the same observation in his introduction, "The Business of Crime," in the Chelsea House edition of Thomas Byrnes' *Professional Criminals of America*.

"The frontier was the great crucible of American crime; and the invention of the dime novel in 1860 soon produced the gun fighter—Wild Bill Hickok and Texas Jack—and later the desperado—Jesse James and Billy the Kid—as national heroes. In time the 'other side,' the forces of law and order, were strengthened by new dime novel stars—Deadwood

Dick, Old Cap Collier, and Old Sleuth. But civilization was fast on the heels of the trapper and the cowboy; and soon, with the spreading domestication of the West and the growth of cities in the East, crime was finding a new home in the polyglot urban environment. Indeed, the shift from the frontier to the city as the center of American crime may perhaps be dated with precision—between, say, the rout of the James Brothers when they tried to knock over the bank at Northfield, Minnesota, on September 7, 1876, and the robbery by the urban gang of Jimmy Hope of nearly \$3 million from the Manhattan Savings Institution in New York City on October 27, 1878. As the balance of power between frontier and city changed, the dime novel responded by coming up with the great urban avenger, Nick Carter.”²

The name “Nick Carter” itself may account for much of his appeal and longevity. In an age when other dime novel sleuths had names like Old Sleuth, Old Cap. Collier, or even Dick Danger, the name Nick Carter was a happy combination of syllables, easy to say and easy to remember. It should be mentioned, however, that Nick Carter once maintained a separate office and identity as a detective known as T. Bolt, or “Old Thunderbolt.” This may have been out of consideration for some of his more conservative clients who disliked dealing with a young man. The name “Nick Carter” also has a ring of modern times. Nicholas (Nick) Carter. Aristocratic yet American. Polished yet tough. Nick: the tough guy who won’t back down. Carter: the man of breeding and education, a touch of sophistication. A reader knew what to ask for: a book by Nick Carter about Nick Carter.

The dime novel detective story has been either ignored or dismissed in a pat phrase by both historians and critics. Howard Haycraft in limiting his field of consideration in *Murder for Pleasure* only says:

“Unless the reader is prepared to admit Nick Carter and his confreres and the semi-fictional Pinkerton reminiscences and their ilk to the dignity of detective novels, it must be said that the American field lay fallow from Poe’s ‘Purloined Letter’ (1844) to Anna Katharine Green’s *The Leavenworth Case* (1878)”³

Julian Symons dismisses the entire output as being of no literary value (with the possible exception of the stories of Dick Donovan). Alma Murch calls them detective stories for the uneducated.⁴ Only Ellery Queen hints that they may have an importance to history that outweighs any literary defects in style. It should be mentioned, however, that the majority of dime novel detective stories appeared only as serials in story papers in those years between Poe and Anna Katharine Green. The deluge came after *The Leavenworth Case*.

Between Edgar Allan Poe and Sherlock Holmes sometimes seems like a great void in the history of the detective story, but it is not so. To fully understand and appreciate the contributions of the later period, we must consider the contributions of these first “paperback originals.” Their existence is proof of the fascination which tales of crime and mystery held for the growing nation. Twentieth century detective fiction did not spring onto the reading table without the aid of the popular notions of how detectives work that was built up by a generation of slim pamphlets with illustrated covers in stark black and white which later gave way to bright colors.

Devoid of literary merit? Perhaps. Melodramatic dialogue? Of course. Repetitive plots? Impossible situations? Unbelievable characters? Certainly. But similar charges can be leveled at the creations of a later generation. The dime novel detective story of today is still in paper covers, but it is 130 pages long and costs ten times as much. Some of it is 60 minutes long (in-

cluding commercials) and costs the flip of a switch and some electricity.

Let us now examine more closely the record of the modern d'Artagnan, Nicholas Carter.

Too often we acquire our concept of a character through generalizations that do not reflect a true picture. Journalists quoting earlier journalists have often depicted Nick Carter as a paragon who neither smoked nor drank. None of them (even the earliest newspaper recorders) can have read many of the stories or they would not have said this. Nick Carter's habits were not abstemious nor were they those of an addict. His use of tobacco and alcohol was always in keeping with the image of the gentleman with his after dinner cigar and glass of port or (if in a saloon on a case) a glass of beer. But these are minor points. What we need to do is follow the great detective on a few cases, perhaps those during a typical year, to see how he works.

Which shall it be? 1886? Too few recorded cases for the purpose. 1891, when the continuous weekly series of his adventures began? No, not enough variety. 1898? He had retired to teach a school for detectives that year. He came out of retirement later and resumed his own career. 1904? Perhaps. It was a good year in some respects, a tragic year in others. His wife, Ethel, was murdered by criminals that year, just as his father, Sim Carter, the man who trained him in his profession, had been murdered by criminals in 1886.

Let the year be 1905, as recorded that year in the 52 issues of the *Nick Carter Weekly* numbered 419 through 470. Nick Carter's biographer at this time (the editor of the notes supplied by Chick Carter) was (presumably) his most faithful, Frederick Van Rensselaer Dey. As was the custom, the cases recorded in those issues covered a period of two or three weeks each. It is one thing to write a different account every week, but another to be able to take three weeks to tell a complete story, each segment separate and independent, but all combining to make up a longer story. The 52 issues may be found in 27 volumes of the Magnet and New Magnet Library.

For the sake of simplicity we will not try to reconcile the chronology problem these episodes present. From internal evidence (including dated letters and references to earlier events) it must be assumed they all occurred before the dates on which they were given to the public in the *Nick Carter Weekly*. This is a more complex problem than we have time to consider here. From the complete *Chronicles of Nick Carter*, let us just represent this as the volume for 1905.

The year 1905 began for Nick Carter with the great detective in the midst of another part of his private war with Doctor Jack Quartz. His first meeting with Quartz had been in 1891 in a trilogy of adventures which appeared in the *Nick Carter Library*, numbers 13, 14, and 15 (dated October 31, November 7, and November 14). Quartz is perhaps the earliest example of a recurring villain in the detective story (Professor Moriarty did not make his first appearance until the *Strand Magazine* published "The Final Problem" in December, 1893). Quartz first, unless the bouts between Old King Brady and the James Boys are considered.

Quartz actually died at the end of that first struggle, but from long experience Nick knew that one could never count an adversary as dead—not even if he himself delivered the fatal wound. If the original menace did not return, there was always the danger of a twin brother, a cousin, or even a loyal henchman or henchwoman (probably one should say henchperson), to take up the cudgel and renew the fight. In the situation published in 1905, the menace is referred to constantly as Doctor Quartz II, and the reader is left to his choice of explanations. Whoever he is, the old Quartz, or a reincarnation,

he means trouble.

The series which began with Nick Carter Weekly No. 413 (26 November 1904) and the discovery of a freight car fitted out like a bedroom—with the addition of four corpses—has by the beginning of 1905 nearly reached its climax. The protege of Dr. Quartz, the Woman Wizard, Zanoni, has escaped from the hospital where she has spent the past six months in a strange coma. Quartz is at present in Dannemora state prison following his conviction for the great hotel murders in Kansas City—but he won't be there for long. By a feat of East Indian magic he disappears and rejoins his associates, Zanoni and Dr. Crystal. Nick Carter has made life so difficult for the wily doctor that he eventually has himself committed to the Ludlow Street jail (under special conditions) to rest from the rigors of the chase.

In No. 420, *Doctor Quartz's Last Play; or, A Hand With a Royal Flush*, Nick is captured by Quartz and taken to an island in the Pacific where the doctor intends to retire to "enjoy the pleasures and profits of vivisection" (as he puts it). His main subject will be the great detective. While drugged, Nick has been convinced he is really an English lord, Lord Algernon Travers, on a world tour for his health. Zanoni passes herself off as his wife, Lady Mary. On the voyage a strange thing happens: she falls in love with Nick Carter, or at least the Nick Carter who has forgotten he is the great detective. Zanoni manages to delay Quartz's plans long enough for Chick, Patsy, and Ten-Ichi (Nick's three chief assistants) to arrive. Nick is brought back to his senses, Quartz is killed with Dr. Crystal's dagger, and Zanoni leaps through a fissure in the rocks to escape. The parting scene in the episode comes when Quartz's body is "taken far out upon the open sea, tied and sewed inside a shot hammock, and dropped into the depths." It would seem the end, and so it was for a period of five years when the mastermind returned from the dead once more. But that is not part of the chronicles for 1905.

Back in New York once again, Nick encounters an international case when the Russian wife of a Japanese General is found murdered by a German officer. The officer is in reality the chief assistant to Grand Duke (or Prince) Michael, head of the Third Section of the St. Petersburg police, who has been sent to keep an eye on Nick Carter whom they suspect is working in the interests of Japan. This is, of course, the period of the Russo-Japanese War.

It is at this time also the Yvonne, Countess de Tierney, returns to the saga. She was last seen some months before this when Nick Carter was in Russia. She is being used by Prince Petrovanoff, of the Russian secret police, to trap the great detective. Apparently, Nick made several enemies during that Russian visit. Petrovanoff is captured instead and sent to Japan as a prisoner of war. Drugged with the same drug that was used on Nick, Petrovanoff does not remember that he is a high official with the secret police. Where did the drug come from? You see, Zanoni was not killed in that leap on the island and is assisting Nick. In the chronicles of Nick Carter, a villain is allowed to reform if he is not killed or jailed. This is especially true of the villainess.

This is not yet the end of the international plotting. General Yagarosi (husband of the woman murdered in the previous episode) arrives to enlist Nick's help in stopping the plot to kidnap the Japanese prince who is presently touring the country. Yagarosi, disguised as the prince, and Nick, disguised as a Mr. Yamagichi, invade the Russian stronghold in Washington, a gambling house. In the fight that ensues, Nick throws one of the Russian agents, a man named Turvanieff, against the wall and injures him badly. His wife, Madame Paula Turvanieff, the real brains behind the conspiracy, vows vengeance. "He has taken away Turvanieff's chance of promotion. He has destroyed my own chance of advancement. He has, in a few hours,

destroyed the edifice which we have consumed years in building up. He has laid waste my entire life and effort. Tell him that I will return. Tell him that I will make him suffer tenfold what he has brought upon me and mine."

Disguised as a Russian sailor and ex-convict from Siberia named Ivan Rogenvenski, Nick manages to get hired by the vengeful Paula to rid the world of himself, as Nick Carter. Yvonne de Tierney, suspected by the nihilists in Paula's entourage, of being a Czarist agent, is captured and taken to their headquarters in New York. The great detective needs all his skill and wit to win this round. To detail the events that follow would take too long—the un-masking of Paula Turvanieff (she has herself been using the nihilists to further her own Czarist purposes), the fight between Nick Carter and a good half-dozen assailants, the capture by Nick of the deadly hand-bombs Paula was planning to use on the assembled company, the self-inflicted death by poison of Paula Turvanieff . . . But when the smoke of battle clears and Connors of the secret service bursts into the room, it is plain that once again Nick Carter is victorious.

"There were nine insensible men stretched upon the floor in the back parlor, amid the debris of the wrecked supper table, and there were three others, apparently unhurt, crouched at the side of the room, while Nick Carter stood again by the mantel with a revolver in either hand, leveled at them. He had won the fight single-handed—won it before the assistance arrived."

After such an auspicious beginning, what can the rest of the year hold for Nick Carter? The next case is an important one for two reasons: it continues the motif (already begun in this year of 1905) of the return of old foes and old friends into the life of the great detective. It also introduces a character who will become a fixture in the Carter household for many years—Joseph, butler, valet, and gentleman's gentleman. The villain in the scheme to relieve Clarence Morgan of most of his fortune is the son of an old foe of Nick's. Dan Derrington, Jr., is as slick a confidence man as his father had been in the old days in Denver, but not too slick for Nick Carter.

(to be continued)

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

358. Mel Morrison, P. O. Box 174, Scarborough, Maine 04070 (New member)
 199. Robert L. Johnson, P. O. Box 47, Bisbee, Ariz. 85603 (Change of address)
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The Rolt-Wheeler—Gilbreth Letters

By John T. Dizer, Jr.

Series book writers turn up in strange places. The Gilbreth Library at Purdue University contains an interesting exchange of letters written in 1927 between the famous Industrial Engineer, Lillian M. Gilbreth (heroine of *Cheaper By The Dozen*) and Francis Rolt-Wheeler, author of the U. S. Service series, Museum series, etc.

The subject of the letters was neither engineering nor series books but astrology. Rolt-Wheeler was then living in Tunis, North Africa, and writing under the name of "Sagittarius Grex." His letterhead says "Specialist in Astrological Research." The first letter is a request for information for horoscopes. This letter reads much like the typical promotional effort of a "con. artist." He could not even send a stamped, self-addressed envelope, "owing to his residence in a foreign country." Mrs. Gilbreth, however, who was a tremendously kind person, took the time to obtain the information and sent it on to "Sagittarius Grex."

Apparently, some of the exchange is missing because the final letter, this time on the letterhead of Francis Rolt-Wheeler, refers to the horoscope which he had previously sent as well as to questions about his books. He proceeds to discuss his boys books, his wife's book and his writings in astrology. He refers to the magazine "Modern Astrology," published in London, and suggests reading his articles on "The Relations of Astrology to Beauty," in that publication. The boys books which he personally prefers are *The Sahara Hunters*, *Before the Days of Columbus* and especially, *The Finder of Fire*. These letters provide interesting sidelights on both of the writers, and the entire texts are, therefore, given below:

August 2, 1927

(Mrs.) Lillian Moller Gilbreth

Montclair, N. J.

Dear Madam:

The enclosed statement will probably interest you, because of your expert knowledge in psychology and scientific management, whether or not the subject has any special appeal personally. A healthy scepticism is an excellent ground for reasonable judgment.

For purposes of research, and for a book I am now engaged in writing (though my published works, heretofore, have dealt mainly with pure science), I am desirous of securing several hundred horoscopes of important people, important in the sense of achievement. In your case, I am anxious to see if the astrological indications for psychological genius appear strongly in your horoscope, as they should. — I trust you will pardon indiscretion, but I am curious, too, to note the indications for many children. (The father's horoscope, too, would be interesting to see).

You will understand that it is more fitting that I should write under a pen-name, as my own name is quite widely known, and Astrology has not yet attained full recognition. In serious and confidential correspondence I am willing to give my name, though, frankly, I do not see that this will serve any purpose save to eliminate all suspicion of superficiality or charlatanism.

Even should you not be personally interested in your horoscope, those of your children (especially if any are a special care to you, from health or other reasons), or those of any of your relatives or friends, I should appreciate the courtesy of a reply, commenting on the subject, as I am anxious to have an expression of opinion of reasons for or against *Astrological Research*. No use will be made of your name, at any time, unless with written permission

from you to do so.

I regret that, owing to my residence in a foreign country, I cannot enclose American stamps for a reply.

Thanking you in advance for this courtesy,

Yours very truly

(signed) Sagittarius Grex

September 27th, 1927

Sagittarius Grex

Villa Astarte, Amilcar

Sidi Bou Said

Tunis, N. Africa

Dear Sir:

I am much interested in your letter and have delayed answering it while I could get the information you ask for. I am interested in all kinds of research and anxious to cooperate in every way that I can.

I am glad to tell you that I have a letter which Mr. Gilbreth's father wrote to his people saying that Mr. Gilbreth was born at 9 A.M. on July 7th, 1868 in Fairfield, Maine. I will mail you with much pleasure a little sketch of his life which I hope you will find interesting, which will give you some of the back ground. If I could afford it I should be so glad to order his horoscope cast, but I feel I cannot do this. But of course I should be most interested to know if your findings agree with the happenings in his life as I knew them. He was by far the finest, most significant person I ever knew, and I rejoice in every little clue I can find to his fineness, because I can use it with the children.

Really I am not at all interested in my own horoscope, but I did write to my mother, to find that she has no records but thinks I was born about four in the morning, and of course knows it was May 24th, 1878.

I will enclose a photo of the children, so that you can see they are 'worth raising' as their father used to say.

I shall be interested at any time to hear anything of your work that you care to send me. I am sending the material you enclosed to a young friend in Pittsburgh who is much interested. I know too little of astrology to pass judgement on either its methods or its findings, but anything that makes us come nearer to the stars is surely worth while.

With every good wish,

Sincerely yours,

Lillian M. Gilbreth

December 24, 1927

Dear Mrs. Gilbreth,

Your letter just received. It has crossed mine to you containing the horoscope. There seems no further need to add anything to the points therein contained.

I write to answer your queries concerning my books. I am "Sagittarius Grex," and when I mentioned that your sons would probably know my name, it is the name on this letter-head that they will know. I have published more than thirty books for boys. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., 275 Congress St., Boston; Geo. H. Doran Co., 244 Madison Ave., New York City, and D. Appleton Co. 35 W. 32nd. St., New York City, will send you catalogues. The books which I prefer, myself, are "The Sahara Hunters" (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard); "Before the Days of Columbus" (Doran); and especially "The Finder of Fire" (Appleton). I've two books coming out this year which please me a good deal: "The Tamer of Herds" (Appleton) in March, and "Attila the Hun" (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard) in October. Both are in press. These are ostensi-

bly boys' books, but it has been my experience that everyone in the family reads them!

For your younger daughters, my wife's little book "When I was a Girl in France" by Georgette Beuret (her maiden name) (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard), has, to my mind, a great deal of charm; it is so very French, even in its English style, which I thought wise to leave and not to Englishify too much. Anglicization might have taken the bloom from the peach.

If you are interested in serious matters, you will find my drama "The Beyond" (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard) full of meat; and your elder daughters might enjoy "Nimrod" (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard).

"Sagittarius Grex" has not done a very great deal of writing for publication, having a very large book on hand which will not be published, probably, before 1929. But the little publication "Modern Astrology," published at Imperial Buildings, Ludgate Circus, London, England, is now running a series of my articles. If you are interested at all in this subject, ask them to send you, as a sample, the number for July 1927 containing my article "What is the Use of it all?" and, if that pleases, or if horoscopy really does give you the idea of a new art, may I be so egotistic as to suggest that you read my articles "The Relations of Astrology to Beauty" beginning in Modern Astrology, issue for October 1927; they will run through eight numbers of the magazine, at least, one a month. They are well-written, and the treatment is new.

Excuse the apparent "publicity-hunting" of this letter. Your questions brought it on your own head! But I don't want it generally known that F. R-W and Sagittarius Grex are the same. To friends it makes little difference; to the public, it might do so.

Trusting that you find the horoscope interesting, and with the heartiest good wishes,

Yours very cordially,

(signed) Sagittarius Grex Francis Rolt-Wheeler

Rolt-Wheeler, according to *Who's Who*, led a most eventful life. He was born in London in 1876, the son of Joseph Rolt and Amina Wheeler, "educated in London, and by travel in Europe, Central and South America and private study; graduated from Western Theological Seminary, Chicago in 1903 and received a Ph.D. from Oskaloosa U. (Ia.) in 1912." He came to the United States at age 16 and was a "stock raiser and lecturer" from 1893 to 1897. From 1897 to 1904 or about age 20 to 27, he was managing editor of the *Winnipeg Daily Telegram* and *Grand Forks (North Dakota) Daily Plaindealer*, (papers, it is suspected, of less than national circulation) city editor of the *Minneapolis Tribune and Telegraph* and night editor of the *Chicago Daily Chronicle*.

He was ordained as priest in the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1904 and served as rector, priest and chaplain until 1914.

His first book was *The Boy With the United States Survey* written in 1909. He wrote at least 50 books for boys in the following twenty years. His interests turned toward the occult in the twenties and his later writings reflected this. Even his boys books, *The Magic Makers of Morocco*, written in 1924, had a strong mystical content. I can find no boys book written after *Pyramid Builder* and *The Boy With the U. S. Aviators*, both published in 1929.

A few of his later writings include *Invisible Beings in This and Other Worlds*, *Correspondence Lessons in Astrology*, *Mystic Gleams From the Holy Grail*, *The Tools of Magic*, and *Talismans of Power*. *Occult Agreement*, apparently his last published work appeared in 1960. He served as director of L'Institut Astrologique de Carthage, Nice, France, director of International Astrological Archives Association and editor in chief of *L'Astrosophie*. He

moved to Tunis sometime after 1922 and lived there and later in Nice, France, until his death in 1960.

The Rolt-Wheeler juveniles were published by Lothrop, Lee & Shepherd, Doran, and Appleton. They were well printed and sturdily bound. The U. S. series contained authentic government photographs. They were also priced considerably higher than the more widely circulated series books. In 1928 the U. S. series was selling at \$1.75 per volume although the price was dropped to \$1.00 in the '30's, according to CBI. One series of 27 volumes, *Children of Other Lands*, is listed in CBI for 1933-37. There is no mention of this series in *Who's Who or Who was Who* and I have never seen a copy. At the moment it remains a mystery.

A listing of his juveniles follows:

U. S. Service Series

1. The Boy With the U. S. Survey ----- 1909
 2. -- Foresters ---- 1910
 3. -- Census ----- 1911
 4. -- Fisheries ----- 1912
 5. -- Indians ----- 1913
 6. -- Explorers ---- 1914
 7. -- Life-savers ---- 1915
 8. -- Mail ----- 1916
 9. -- Weather Men -- 1917
 10. -- Naturalists -- 1918
 11. -- Trappers ---- 1919
 12. -- Inventors ---- 1920
 13. -- Secret Service 1921
 14. -- Miners ----- 1922
 15. -- Diplomats --- 1923
 16. -- Radio ----- 1924
 17. The Boy With the American Red Cross 1925
 18. The Boy With the U. S. Marines ----- 1926
 19. -- Navy ----- 1927
 20. -- Aviators ---- 1929
- Publisher: Lothrop, Lee & Shepherd

Museum Series

1. The Monster Hunters ---- 1916
2. The Polar Hunters ----- 1917
3. The Aztec Hunters ----- 1918
4. The Wreck Hunters ----- 1922
5. The Sahara Hunters ----- 1923
6. The Gem Hunters ----- 1924
7. Hunters of Ocean Depths - 1925
8. The News Hunters ----- 1926
9. The Tusk Hunters ----- 1927

Romance—History of America Series

1. In the Days Before Columbus 1921
 2. The Quest of the Western World 1921
 3. The Coming of the Peoples 1922
 4. Colonial Ways and Wars -- 1925
- Publisher: Doran

Round the World with the Boy Journalists Series

1. Plotting in Pirate Seas --- 1921
2. Hunting Hidden Treasure in the Andes ----- 1921
3. Heroes of the Ruins ----- 1923
4. A Toreador of Spain ----- 1923
5. The Magic-Makers of Morocco 1924

Publisher: Doran

Wonder of War Series

1. Wonder of War in the Air 1917
2. Wonder of War on Land -- 1918
3. Wonder of War at Sea --- 1919
4. Wonder of War in the Holy Land 1919

Publisher: L, L & S

Single Titles

- True Stories of Great Americans—
Thomas Alva Edison ---- 1915
- The Boys' Book of the World War 1920
- The Book of Cowboys L, L & S 1921
- The Son of the Volcano ----- 1924
- The Roots of the Race (this title is listed in Magic Makers of Morocco and a Toreador of Spain, but I have no other information on it. It may be The Son of the Volcano)
- The Finder of Fire -- Appleton 1927
- The Tamer of Herds -- Appleton 1928
- In the Time of Attila -- L, L & S 1928
- The Pyramid Builder -- Appleton 1929

Single Titles Not Yet Identified as Juveniles

- Charlotte Corday ----- 1917
- The Indians of Canada ----- 1926
- The World War for Liberty -- 1919

RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES CONCERNING DIME NOVELS

THRILLS FOR A DIME, by Bob Lundegaard. Article appearing in the Minneapolis Tribune, Sunday, April 7, 1974. A cursory review of dime novels by a staff writer well illustrated from the Hess Collection at the University of Minnesota. (Sent in by Karen Nelson, Curator of the Hess Collection).

DIME NOVEL FINDS STATUS, Fall River Man Has an Envious Collection, by Bob Kerr. Article appearing in the Providence Sunday Journal, January 27, 1974. A quick review of the LeBlanc dime novel collection on the occasion of an exhibit at the Annual Antique Show held at Madison Square Garden, New York.

RESIDENT WILL EXHIBIT 19th CENTURY AMERICANA, Anonymous. Article in Fall River Herald News, Wednesday, January 23, 1974. Short article concerning dime novel exhibit at Antique show. One dime novel used to illustrate the article.

FAMED DETECTIVE NICK CARTER ONCE FALL RIVER MILL HAND, Collector Has Story, by Pat McGowan. Article appearing in the New Bedford Standard Times, Sunday March 31, 1974. A review of the LeBlanc dime novel collection geared to dime novels with SE Massachusetts locale. The occasion was an exhibit at Bridgewater State College of dime novels from his collection.

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